Grade 3 Language Arts | Chapter 3

Lesson 1: Characters and Actions

Learn

A character is a person or other figure in a story. A character's actions and words can provide evidence of feelings or traits. A trait is a quality, such as patience, while a feeling can change during the story. Support an inference with details, and avoid claiming what the story does not tell.

Worked example

If a character waits quietly while a friend finishes speaking, a reader may infer patience. The action supports the inference, but does not prove the person is always patient.

Read the original passage

Amara wanted to finish the class mural before lunch. When a jar of paint tipped over, she stopped painting and helped Luis wipe the table. 'We can finish the sky after lunch,' she said. Luis found clean paper for their next sketch. The mural was not finished that morning.

Advanced extension

Explain how Amara's words affect the next step in the story.

Learn

The setting is where and when a story happens. The plot is the sequence of important events, often including a problem and a response. A story may not provide an exact date or place; use only the details it gives.

Worked example

If a story says children work in a garden after school, the setting includes a garden and after school. The exact town is unknown unless the text says it.

Read the original passage

After school, Jonah walked to the community garden. He found that the gate was stuck. He called an adult, who lifted the latch while Jonah held the gate steady. Together they entered and checked the seedlings. The story does not name the town.

Advanced extension

Explain how the stuck gate changes what Jonah does before checking the seedlings.

Learn

A problem is a challenge in a story; a response is what characters do about it. A central message is an idea a reader can support with events and details. Different reasonable messages may fit, but evidence matters.

Worked example

If a character asks for help to repair a broken sign, a possible message is that working together can solve a problem. The help and repair support that message.

Read the original passage

The class planned a welcome table, but their sign was hard to read. Talia suggested making larger letters. Ben brought a marker, and together they wrote a new sign. The class could read the new sign from the doorway.

Advanced extension

Suggest another supported message and explain why it fits.

Learn

Compare means tell how things are alike; contrast means tell how they are different. Compare stories by their characters, settings, problems and responses. Use details from both texts.

Worked example

If two characters each help clean a spill, that is a similarity. If one cleans a classroom and the other cleans a kitchen, that is a difference in setting.

Read the original passage

Story A: At home, Eli found a loose button on his coat. He asked an adult to help sew it back on.
Story B: At the library, Nara found a torn book cover. She told a librarian, who set the book aside for repair.

Advanced extension

Compare the two problems and explain what neither story tells you.

Learn

A narrative tells events in an order a reader can follow. Introduce a character and setting, describe an event or problem, and tell what happens next. Dialogue can show what a character says. Revise for clarity, then edit capitals and punctuation.

Worked example

Beginning: 'At the park, Mina found a lost glove.' Next: 'She took it to the park office.' Ending: 'An attendant placed it in the lost-and-found box.' The story does not claim whose glove it was.

Read the original passage

Practice plan: Character: Mina. Setting: a park. Problem: a glove is found. Response: Mina takes the glove to the park office. Ending: an attendant places it in lost and found. These are invented practice details.

Advanced extension

Add one sentence of dialogue that fits the plan, then edit its punctuation with an adult.